ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
AND
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

SECTION 208
SNAGGING AND CLEARING INVESTIGATION
KONKAPOT RIVER
NORTH CANAAN, CONNECTICUT AND SHEFFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

PREPARED BY

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BIOLOGIST

JULY 1984

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
NEW ENGLAND DIVISION
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
WALTHAM, MA 02254-9149

Unclassified

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE *(When Data Entered)*

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING FORM
1. REPORT NUMBER	2. GOVT ACCESSION NO.	3. RECIPIENT'S CATALOG NUMBER
4. TITLE *(and Subtitle)* Section 208-Snagging and Clearing Investigation, Konkapot River, North Canaan, CT and Sheffield, MA (EA and FONSI).		5. TYPE OF REPORT & PERIOD COVERED Environmental Assessment 6. PERFORMING ORG. REPORT NUMBER
7. AUTHOR(s) Elizabeth Parfenuk U.S. Army Corps of Engineers New England Division		8. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER(s)
9. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers New England Division, Planning, Impact Analysis 424 Trapelo Road, Waltham, MA 02254		10. PROGRAM ELEMENT, PROJECT, TASK AREA & WORK UNIT NUMBERS
11. CONTROLLING OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers New England Division, Planning, Impact Analysis 424 Trapelo Road, Waltham, MA 02254		12. REPORT DATE July 1984 13. NUMBER OF PAGES 30
14. MONITORING AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS*(if different from Controlling Office)*		15. SECURITY CLASS. *(of this report)* Unclassified 15a. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE

16. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT *(of this Report)*

Approval for public release: Distribution unlimited

17. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT *(of the abstract entered in Block 20, if different from Report)*

18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

19. KEY WORDS *(Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)*

Environmental Assessment (EA)
Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)
Section 208 - Snagging and Clearing

20. ABSTRACT *(Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)*

Removal of accumulated debris from the Konkapot River in Sheffield, MA is proposed which would result in a lower occurrence of floods on dairy farms located in North Canaan, CT. The project will not result in any unacceptable impacts to the environment, and therefore, will not require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FIGURES

APPENDICES

I. Introduction and Project History

The New England Division of the United States Army Corps of Engineers has reviewed environmental resources as part of the proposed Section 208, Snagging and Clearing Investigation for North Canaan, Connecticut and Sheffield, Massachusetts. This document has been prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, (NEPA), and all appropriate environmental laws, regulations, and executive orders. This document contains an assessment of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed action and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

This site is somewhat isolated from the public, but is associated with neighboring dairy farms and a gravel pit; the area is sometimes used by deer hunters. The Konkapot River, in the proposed project area, is surrounded by dense vegetation. Although there is no complete record containing past occurrences of flooding, dairy farmers have complained of continued flooding from the Konkapot River resulting in erosion and soil loss along with damages to corn crops and cattle grazing areas on their farm land. A Section 208 has never been performed in the proposed project area, but similar debris removal has taken place on the Blackberry River in North Canaan, Connecticut.

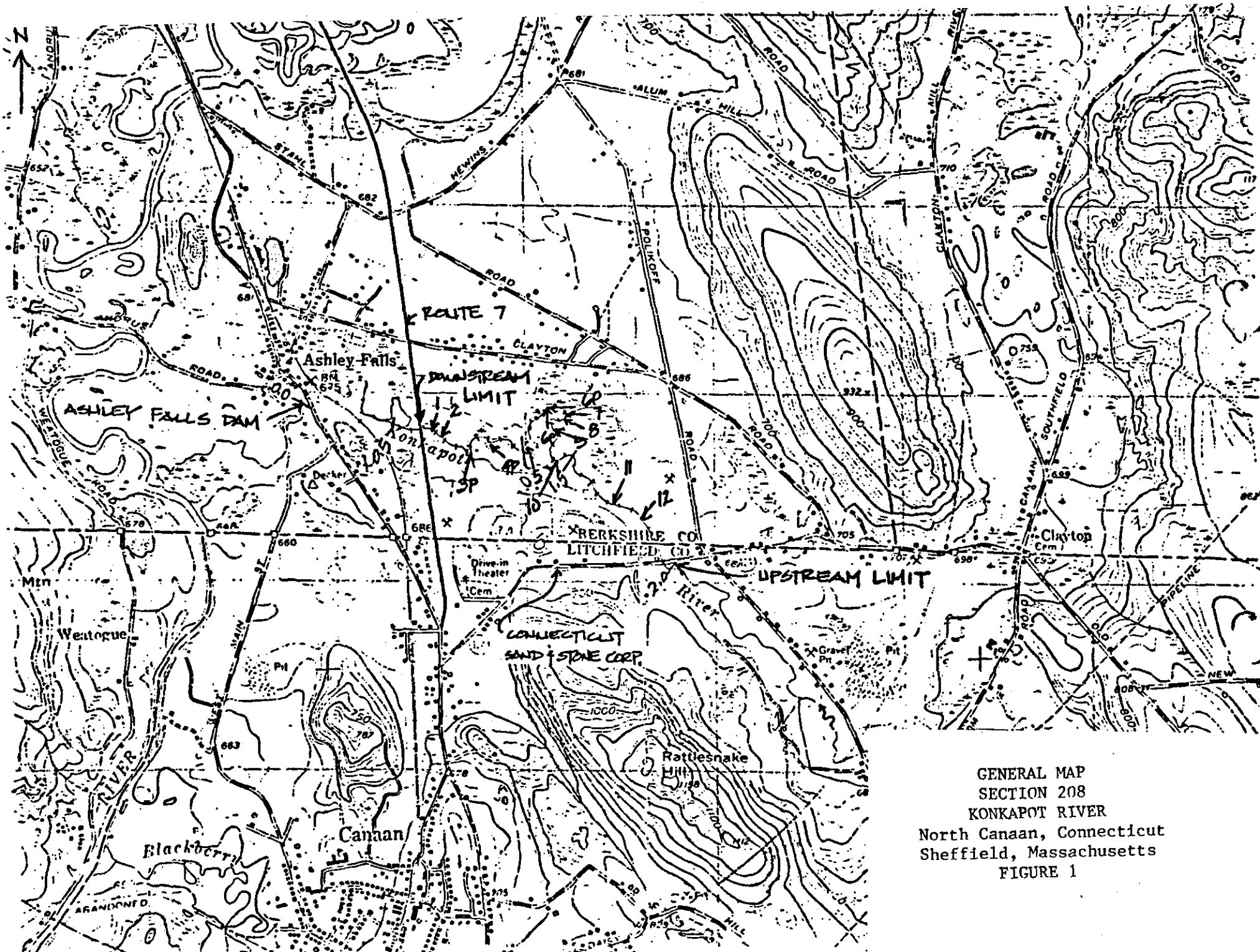
II. Project Description

Removal of debris such as dead trees, slash, and miscellaneous non-woody materials from within the channel, and standing dead and living trees rooted at or near the channel banks is proposed for this project. The debris is scattered along 7500 linear feet of the Konkapot River. Less than seven acres of area will be affected by the project. Although several sand and gravel shoals are present, their small accumulation does not warrant excavation.

The clearing is proposed to be accomplished by a crew with chain saws and hand tools. The debris material would then be carried to a loading/chipping area which is located near the river. Any debris incapable of being chipped would be hauled to a disposal site within a two-mile radius.

An access road of gravel material will be constructed to provide access to debris material downstream of the gravel pit. This road will be a permanent structure to be used in the future for maintenance work and will not be placed on any wetland areas. Future maintenance will be coordinated with the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, the appropriate Conservation Commission, and any local agencies involved in providing any necessary permits. Maintenance would include a two day effort by a two or three person crew. Less than 40 cubic yards or one to two truckloads of debris would be removed from the site. It is anticipated that this would be accomplished in one day, twice a year.

The proposed work would be completed in approximately 41 work days. See Figure 1 for general depiction of the proposed project and for approximate location of debris concentrations. Inclosure 3 from the main report pictures various debris accumulations.



GENERAL MAP
SECTION 208
KONKAPOT RIVER
North Canaan, Connecticut
Sheffield, Massachusetts
FIGURE 1

III. Project Purpose and Need

The purpose of the proposed project is to remove the accumulated debris from a section of the Konkapot River located north of Route 124 in Sheffield, Massachusetts, so that the channel capacity of the river is not restricted. The accumulation of debris has incited the occurrence of flood damages to dairy farms located just upstream of the proposed project area in North Canaan, Connecticut. This situation initiated the proposed investigation. (See Inclosure 1 from the main report, letter dated June 6, 1983.)

IV. Project Alternatives

A. No Action Alternative:

The no action alternative considers the situation where no removal of debris would take place. If this were to happen, debris would continue to accumulate, further restricting the channel capacity of the river. Flooding of the upstream dairy farms would occur more frequently and be more severe. Therefore, this alternative is not a viable solution.

B. Disposal Alternatives:

(1) On-Site: This disposal alternative consists of an upland disposal site located on project lands. Under the proposed project circumstances there would be the possibility of the obstructions reforming which should be considered detrimental to the existing dairy farms which would defeat the project's purpose.

(2) Off-Site: This disposal alternative consists of an upland disposal site located off project lands. Because of the adverse effects "on-site" disposal would produce, "off-site" disposal has been selected for the proposed project. The materials would be removed by using chain saws and hand tools. The debris would then be carried to a loading/chipping area near the river or hauled to a disposal site which as yet has not been identified, but is assumed to be within a two-mile radius of the project area.

This alternative would not only aid in avoiding redevelopment of obstructions, but would also be a more environmentally sound method of disposal since no secondary effects to the proposed project area (especially its wetlands) would occur.

C. Other Project Alternatives:

During preliminary planning stages other options were considered to resolve the problem situation which included the construction of reservoirs, floodwalls, and/or levees. However, the cost of these measures would have far exceeded any benefits and therefore, are only mentioned briefly.

The snagging and clearing alternative chosen provides an adequate level of protection at a minimum cost and is the most practical solution to the flooding problem in this area.

V. Affected Environment

A. General/Land Use:

The Konkapot River is located in the northwest portion of Connecticut and in the southwest portion of Massachusetts. About two miles downstream of the debris area stands the Ashley Falls Dam. The project area itself is surrounded by wetlands. The majority of the debris areas can be accessed along Route 124 in North Canaan. The area is also bounded by Route 7, Clayton Road, and Polikoff Road. (See Figure 2 which includes a quadrangle view.)

The topographic map (Figure 2) indicates that elevations around the dairy farm are low which intensifies flood damages connected with the debris accumulations. The Konkapot River flows toward the northwest.

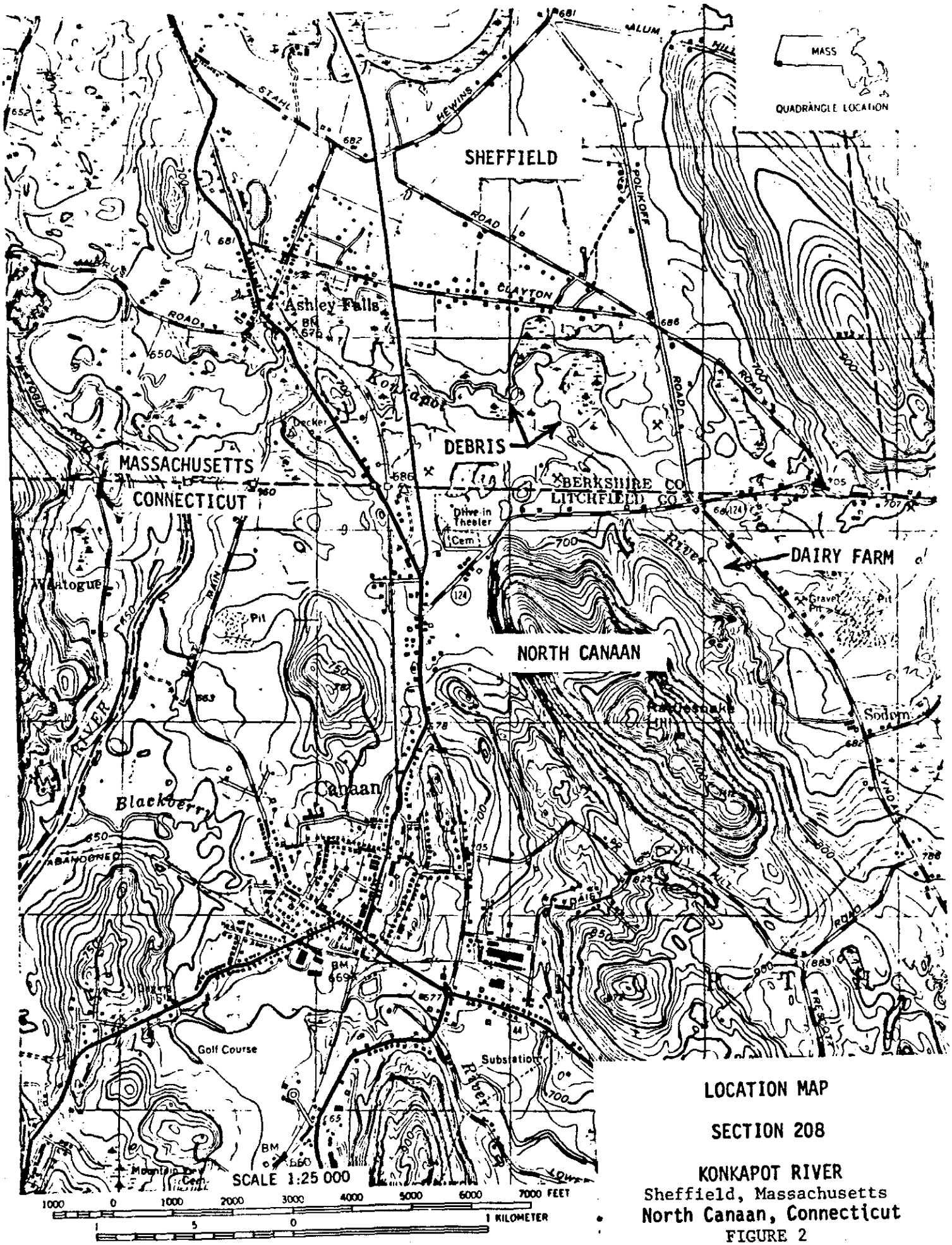
During a site visit ground ferns were mostly untouched and deer tracks were abundant. The sound of trucks and other machinery could be heard throughout the area, emanating from the gravel pit. Deer hunting occurs in the proposed project area usually during the first week of December.

Areas surrounding the Konkapot River are characterized by varying degrees of slopes made from sand, humus, or gravel compositions. Flat lands also exist where periodic water saturations occur resulting in wetland conditions. Most of the areas on either side of the river are heavily wooded with a very dense understory.

The Konkapot River meanders through the project area taking very sharp turns in some places. Portions of the river are shallow while other sections are relatively deep. In the five mile reach of the river which starts in North Canaan, Connecticut the Konkapot flows in a northwesterly direction back into Massachusetts and empties into the Housatonic River at Ashley Falls. Here the river gradient is relatively flat and has an average slope of approximately 5 to 8 feet per mile. It is in this stretch of the river that log jams and built-up debris have become obstructions to flow. The Konkapot River has a total drainage area of 61 square miles at Ashley Falls. The entire project area extends along the river a distance of about 7,500 linear feet.

B. Water Quality:

The water quality of the Konkapot River has been designated by the State of Massachusetts as having a Class B water rating. This class of water is suitable for bathing, other recreational purposes, agricultural uses, certain industrial processes and cooling; provides an excellent fish and wildlife habitat; and has good aesthetic value.



LOCATION MAP

SECTION 208

KONKAPOT RIVER
Sheffield, Massachusetts
North Canaan, Connecticut
FIGURE 2

A Section 404(b)(1) Evaluation and Water Quality Certificate are unnecessary for this project since no fill (temporary/permanent) will be placed in any waters of the United States. Since a 404(b)(1) Evaluation will not be required, a Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the State will likewise not be required (telephone conversation with Mr. Dave Slagle, July 17, 1984).

C. Terrestrial Resources:

The terrestrial habitat consists of Beech (Fagus spp.), Maple (Acer spp.), Elm (Ulmus spp.), Birch (Betula spp.), Alder (Alnus spp.), Ash (Fraxinus spp.), Pine (Pinus spp.) Basswoods (Tilia spp.), Hickory (Carya spp.), Oak (Quercus spp.), Sycamore (Platanus occidentalis), various wildflowers, ferns, and grasses. There is a very dense understory which beside ferns, contains Milkweed (Asclepias incarnata), Poison Ivy (Toxicodendron radicans), and varying species of shrubs, occurring less frequently. Most of the area is covered with vegetation. Only occasionally do bare, sandy spots exist. See Inclosure 1 from the main report which includes a map showing the project's wetland and wooded areas.

Various songbirds and Ruffed Grouse (Bonasa umbellus) inhabit the proposed project area. Beaver (Castor canadensis), raccoon (Procyon lotor), muskrat (Ondatra zibethica), cottontail rabbit (Sylvilagus spp.) and mink (Mustela vison) also inhabit this region. Deer are abundant as indicated by tracks found in sandy areas.

Thousands of honey bees (Apidae spp.) are colonized in two large Sycamore trees located in the proposed project area. These valuable insects produce honey and beeswax, and pollinate plants.

D. Aquatic Resources:

The Konkapot River's source is Lake Garfield in Monterey, Massachusetts. From there it flows south through New Marlborough, Massachusetts to the Massachusetts - Connecticut state line. In this 15 mile reach, the river drops an average of 40 feet per mile. Upon reaching North Canaan, Connecticut the river flows toward the northwest back into Massachusetts where it empties into the Housatonic River at Ashley Falls. In this 5 mile section the average slope is only 5 to 8 feet per mile. These 5 miles contain the obstructions this project is addressing and considering to remove.

Ducks live in the project area where unstable wooded areas provide shelter. Their food consists of aquatic plants, seeds, grass, small aquatic animals, and insects. The Wood Duck (Aix sponsa) was identified as an inhabitant of this area. No duck hunting is known to take place in the area.

Other species which utilize the project's aquatic resources include two-lined salamander (Eurycea bislineata), bullfrog (Rana catesbeiana), green frog (R. clamitans), pickerel frog (R. palustris), northern leopard frog (R. pipiens), spring peeper (Hyla crucifer), painted turtle (Chrysemys picta), wood turtle (Clemmys insculpta), northern water snake (Natrix sipedon), eastern garter snake (Thamnophis sirtalis), and various insects.

Fish also occupy the project waters. Rainbow trout (Salmo gairdneri), carp (Cyprinus carpio), bridled shiner (Notropis bifrenatus), common shiner (N. cornutis), blacknose dace (Rhinichthys atralulus), white sucker (Catostomus commersoni), yellow perch (Perca flavescens), pumpkinseed (Lepomis gibbosus), and bluegill (L. macrochirus) are common to these waters. Trout are stocked in the Konkapot River. Fishing is very unlikely to occur in the proposed project area since it is isolated, congested with plant growth, and difficult to access.

E. Threatened and Endangered Species:

Except for occasional transient individuals no federally listed or proposed threatened or endangered species are known to exist in the proposed project area. (See Appendix B for letter and federally designated threatened and endangered species lists for Massachusetts and Connecticut.)

F. Cultural Resources:

According to the Massachusetts Historical Commission, there are no known or anticipated significant historic or archeological resources within the proposed project area. (See letter in Appendix B.)

VI. Environmental Consequences

A. Land Use/Impacts From Project Activity:

Both current and future land use of the proposed project area should not be affected by the project. Deer hunting should not be affected since the project can be scheduled to avoid the deer hunting season. The resulting project conditions will be periodically maintained, however, since without the project this area would be affected by periodic flooding.

The materials to be removed may be brought to a loading/chipping area before reaching the disposal area. Only short-term impacts to the project area are expected to result from this disposal option. Since disposal of debris will not be on the project site, wetlands will not be affected. The permanent access road will be constructed adjacent to the existing wetland areas. Only slight turbidity should result from the removal of debris from the river.

B. Water Quality:

Water quality should not alter from its present Class B water quality rating. The only turbidity will be slight and of short duration. Contaminants should not be released from the large materials to be removed from the Konkapot River. Usually only sediments of fine grain size trap contaminants, and this will not be expected to occur due to the large size of the debris.

C. Terrestrial Resources:

As a result of project activities, wildlife will be affected for a short period by increased noise and traffic. The noise change will only be slight since a continuous machinery sound is already present due to nearby gravel pit operations. The addition of a work crew into the area should not cause any significant adaptations by the wildlife community.

The permanent access road (approximately 600 linear feet long and 12 feet wide) will only be used periodically by maintenance teams. This added road should not promote an increase in use of the project area since the access road will be concealed from the main road travelers. Wildlife should adapt with no problems to this new addition in their environment.

Some living trees and probably surrounding shrubs will be removed from the riverbank. This is necessary to prevent further obstructions from forming in the river. This may also add in stablizing any erosive action occurring as a result of loose soils around exposed tree roots. The two large Sycamore trees which house thousands of honey bees will not be affected by project activities.

D. Aquatic Resources:

Any fish occupying project waters should not experience a significant impact from project activities. Any areas being cleared of debris in the Konkapot River should be successfully avoided by any fish encountering project activities. Although debris may provide cover for some species of fish, enough debris will be left in the project area due to inadequate access for its removal to provide shelter for any species requiring it. Spawning periods for any species inhabiting the area will be avoided when selecting a definite time frame for project activities.

Ducks, frogs, and various aquatic species may also use debris for protection purposes. However, since not all the debris will be removed from the area, this should not interfere significantly with their habitats. Ducks in particular would be disturbed by the lack of wooded shelter. However, they should be able to relocate to neighboring vicinities where wooded areas still exist. These species would also be able to avoid any adverse project activities by moving out of the work area temporarily.

E. Threatened and Endangered Species:

Since no threatened or endangered species continually live in the proposed project area, there will be no significant impact to any such species. The area will not be altered significantly to affect any transient individuals.

F. Cultural Resources:

No cultural resources are present in the proposed project area. No further coordination with the Massachusetts Historical Commission is required.

VII. Mitigation Measures

Scheduling of project activities will be limited to very late fall to avoid interfering with any possible fish spawning in the Konkapot River. Because of low flow conditions, August to December is an ideal time for tree removal. Deer hunting season will also be avoided.

Machinery will be prohibited from working directly in wetland areas to preserve the usefulness of these environments. To protect water quality, trees will be hauled without locating equipment in the river.

Only clean gravel fill will be used to construct the access road. This road will be permanent so maintenance work can be performed when necessary to insure the integrity/effectiveness of the project.

VIII. Coordination

A public notice is not necessary to accompany this project since a Section 404 (b) (1) Evaluation and Water Quality Certificate are not required for the proposed work. The project has been discussed by oral or written communication with the following interests/agencies:

Ms. Natalie Funk, Town Clerk, Sheffield, MA
Conservation Commission, Sheffield, MA
Mr. Dave Slagle, Division of Water Pollution Control
Massachusetts Historical Commission
Mr. Fred Benson, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife

After a field investigation of the project area was conducted and the working draft environmental assessment was reviewed, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has the following recommendations:

A. Only major obstructions to the passage of flood flows be removed.

B. Determination of the actual obstructions/material to be removed be coordinated with the FWS and the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MDFW).

C. Future maintenance of the project be coordinated with the MDFW.

No problems are foreseen in complying with items A and C. In regard to item B, the actual obstructions to be removed will be coordinated with FWS and MDFW, however, the determination of the effect on flooding and need for removal of debris must remain with the Corps of Engineers.

Statutes	Compliance
1. Archeological and Historic Preservation Act, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 469 et seq.	No cultural resources would be impacted by the proposed action. (See letter in Appendix B).
2. Clean Air Act, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq.	Submission of this report to the Regional Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for review constitutes compliance with the Act.
3. Clean Water Act (Federal Water Pollution Control Act), as amended, 33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.	The water of the Konkapot River will not be affected by project activities. No fill material (temporary/permanent) will be placed in any waters of the United States. A Section 404(b)(1) Evaluation and Water Quality Certificate are not required.
4. Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.	Not applicable.
5. Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.	Coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) shows that only possible transient individuals may exist in the proposed project area. No impact should result. (See letter in Appendix B).
6. Estuary Protection Act, 16 U.S.C. 1221 et seq.	Not applicable.
7. Federal Water Project Recreation Act, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 4601-12 et seq.	Not applicable.
8. Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.	Coordination with the FWS constitutes compliance with this Act. (See letter in Appendix B).
9. Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 4601-4 et seq.	Coordination by the Department of the Interior constitutes compliance with this Act.
10. Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act of 1972, as amended, 33 U.S.C. 1404 et seq.	Not applicable.
11. National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.	No cultural resources would be impacted by the proposed action. (See letter in Appendix B).
12. National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 432 et seq.	The preparation of this document constitutes compliance with this Act.
13. Rivers and Harbors Appropriation Act of 1899, as amended, 33 U.S.C. 401 et seq.	Not applicable.
14. Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1001 et seq.	This project is being performed to aid in flood prevention.
15. Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1271 et seq.	The Konkapot River has not been identified under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, but is a candidate for inclusion. (See 1979 list).

Executive Orders	Compliance
1. Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management, 24 May 1977.	Implementing this project will help aid in eliminating flooding upstream of the project area.
2. Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands, 24 May 1977.	Locating the permanent access road adjacent to the wetland areas will avoid significant impacts to these regions. Location of the disposal site off the project area will aid in protecting the project area's wetlands.
3. Executive Order 12114, Environmental Effects Abroad of Major Federal Actions, 4 January 1979.	Not applicable.

X. References

Personal communications, Mr. Fred Benson, October 4, 1984. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ecological Services, Concord, N.H.

Personal communications, Mr. Dave Slagle, July 17, 1984. Division of Water Pollution Control, Water Resources Commission, Boston, Massachusetts.

Personal communications, Ms. Natalie Funk, December 11, 1984. Town Clerk, Sheffield, Massachusetts.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, July 1983. Franklin Falls Dam, Pemigewasset River, Franklin, New Hampshire. Environmental Assessment - Sediment and Debris Removal.

Freshwater Wetlands - A Guide to Common Indicator Plants of the Northeast, Dennis W. Magee, 1981. The University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, Massachusetts.

The Game Fishes of New England and Southeast Canada, Peter Thompson, 1980. Down East, Camden, Maine.

Fishes of North America, Earl S. Herald. Doubleday and Company, Incorporated, New York.

Birds of North America, Chandler S. Robbins, Bertel Bruun, and Herbert S. Zim, 1983. Western Publishing Company, Inc., Racine, Wisconsin

APPENDIX A

Finding of No Significant Impact

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

A Snagging and Clearing Investigation (Section 208) is proposed for a portion of the Konkapot River in Sheffield, Massachusetts to aid in lessening the flooding experienced by dairy farmers in North Canaan, Connecticut. Removal of debris is proposed to occur intermittently along 7500 linear feet of the Konkapot River. Clearing will be done by a crew with chain saws and hand tools. Materials removed will be brought to a loading/chipping area near the river or hauled to a nearby disposal site. A permanent access road will be built for use in future maintenance work. The proposed work will be accomplished in approximately 41 work days.

Implementation of the proposed project will not require a significant commitment of physical, natural, or human resources. The impacts have been outlined in the assessment and are summarized below.

Some deer hunting activities are associated with the area, but should not be affected by project activities. Only slight turbidity should result from the removal of debris. This should be of short duration, thus not conflicting with the existing water quality. Noise and air pollution produced by the project should be minimal, not significantly affecting any wildlife or aquatic species. Trees must be removed from the riverbank to prevent recurring flood conditions. The slightly altered environment created through project actions should not significantly impact the project area's terrestrial or aquatic inhabitants. No threatened or endangered species occupy the proposed project area. Cultural resources are not present and, consequently will not be affected by the project. The project will be scheduled so it will not interfere with possible fish spawnings. Only clean gravel fill will be used to construct the permanent access road which will not be located on or affect any wetlands.

There do not appear to be any major environmental problems, conflicts, or disagreements in implementing the proposed work. Implementation of the proposed action will not have a significant impact on the human environment and, therefore, will not require an Environmental Impact Statement.

/S/

Date

2-27-85

Carl B. Sciple
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
Division Engineer

APPENDIX B

Pertinent Correspondence

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
NEW ENGLAND DIVISION, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
424 TRAPELO ROAD
WALTHAM, MASSACHUSETTS 02254

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

December 13, 1984

Planning Division
Impact Analysis Branch

Mr. Gordon E. Beckett, Supervisor
United States Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
Ecological Services
P.O. Box 1518
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Mr. Beckett:

This letter is in response to your letter dated October 22, 1984, which concerned a Fish and Wildlife Report on a Section 208 - Snagging and Clearing Investigation located on the Konkapot River in Sheffield, Massachusetts and North Canaan, Connecticut.

The proposed project area extends along the Konkapot River in Sheffield, Massachusetts from U.S. Route 7 upstream to the Massachusetts-Connecticut state line. The recommended plan consists of removing all fallen and suspect trees, log jams, and miscellaneous debris from this portion of the Konkapot River, which hinder the passage of flood flows. Debris may be carried to a loading/chipping area located in an open field near the river before being brought to an off-site, upland disposal site.

In order to enhance coordination relationships, a working draft Environmental Assessment was sent to your office on September 17, 1984. Your staff's comments were addressed in detail in a revised version of the assessment. A copy of this final Environmental Assessment is enclosed for your information.

Based on the information you present from your one day field investigation, we believe our earlier appraisal of the project's environmental effect remains unchanged. That is, the project would not have a significant environmental impact. Our review and response to your comments is given in the following paragraphs.

Paragraph four of your letter deals with the various species of fish inhabiting the proposed project area. Through prior coordination with the Sheffield Conservation Commission, we found that rainbow trout, carp, bridled shiner, common shiner, blacknose dace, white sucker, yellow perch, and possibly pumpkinseed and bluegill inhabit the proposed project area. This is not consistent with your list which includes largemouth bass and brown bullhead. According to the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, trout are stocked in the Konkapot River. However, our coordination with town officials indicates that the fishery within the project area itself is considered unused since the area is isolated, hard to access, and congested.

In regard to vegetation in the project area, your staff was aware that the information obtained through your field investigation was incorporated into the current version of the EA. In addition, the fact that the area is used for deer hunting purposes has been incorporated into the current version of the EA.

In a letter received from the Sheffield Conservation Commission on September 12, 1984, a list of the common aquatic and terrestrial species occupying the proposed project area was provided. The species identified in the list were incorporated into the current EA. Your letter indicated that, "Cottontail rabbits were not seen in the area although the combination of multiflora rose and herbaceous vegetation suggests that a significant population of this species should be present," however, cottontail rabbits were not mentioned in the Sheffield Conservation Commission list. It should not be assumed that just because an area has suitable habitat for cottontail rabbits that a significant population of this species occupies it.

Wood duck habitat, by nature, is not stable. This species is accustomed to a changing environment because the water habitat it occupies is constantly in motion. Since your letter indicated that no specific data was consulted on the wood duck habitat in the proposed project area, it should not be assumed that the neighboring areas are at or near maximum carrying capacity. In our opinion, we do not believe the proposed project would significantly affect waterfowl. Local officials have indicated that duck hunting is very unlikely to occur in the proposed project area.

Section 208 of the 1954 Flood Control Act authorized the Corps of Engineers to provide flood control protection by small snagging and clearing projects. Our staff's engineers have identified an area where obstructions have become dangerous restrictions to flow in the river, and have recommended their removal. These include dead trees and unstable pockets of debris. Twelve (12) concentrations were identified in the working draft EA based on a field survey conducted in 1983, and they include only those accumulations of debris which could in our judgement cause flooding.

The actual obstructions to be removed will be coordinated with your service and the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. The determination of the effect on flooding and need for removal, however, clearly remains with our engineers. Future maintenance of the project area will be decided on by the communities in which the project lies. They will coordinate the maintenance work with the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, the appropriate Conservation Commission, and any local agencies involved in providing any necessary permits. It is estimated that a $2,000 maintenance fee will be required. Maintenance would include a two day effort by a two or three person crew. Less than 40 cubic yards or one to two truckloads of debris would be removed from the site. It is anticipated that this would be accomplished in one day, twice a year.

Sincerely,

for Joseph L. Ignazio
Chief, Planning Division

Enclosure

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
ECOLOGICAL SERVICES
P.O. BOX 1518
CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03301

Colonel Carl B. Sciple
Division Engineer
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
New England Division
424 Trapelo Road
Waltham, Massachusetts 02254

OCT [illegible]

Dear Colonel Sciple:

This Fish and Wildlife Report on the Section 208-Snagging and Clearing Investigation, Konkapot River, Sheffield, Massachusetts, and North Canaan, Connecticut, has been prepared under authority of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (48 Stat. 401, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.).

Your Reconnaissance Report, September, 1984, recommended snagging and clearing along 7,500 feet of the Konkapot River in Sheffield, Massachusetts, extending from Route 7 upstream to the Massachusetts-Connecticut State line. Work would include removal of log jams, fallen trees, miscellaneous debris and standing dead and live trees rooted at or near the channel banks which hinder the passage of flood flows. A permanent gravel access road, 600 feet long and 12 feet wide would be constructed for the initial removal of debris and for future maintenance of the project. Debris would be carried to a loading/chipping area located away from the river. Debris that could not be chipped would be hauled to an unspecified disposal site within a 2-mile radius.

We have reviewed your Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA), July, 1984, and find it unacceptable from a fish and wildlife viewpoint. The document does not adequately describe the terrestrial habitat, fish and wildlife resources or the potential impacts of the project upon these resources. Our field investigations do not confirm your "Finding of No Significant Impact."

A field investigation of the project area was conducted on October 3, 1984, by personnel of this Service. The Konkapot River, within the project area, is a relatively slow moving-meandering stream with an average width of about 35-40 feet. It is annually stocked with about 200 brook, brown or rainbow trout and receives considerable fishing pressure. This contradicts the statement in the DEA (page 3) that "The project area is currently unused by the local population." The river also supports yellow perch, largemouth bass, brown bullhead, white sucker and various minnows. There are no herring (Clupeidae) in the Konkapot River as indicated in the DEA.

The streambanks are well vegetated with trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants. Tree species include red maple, silver maple, boxelder, American elm, ash (spp.), hickory (spp.), American basswood, oak (spp.), black willow, American sycamore, nannyberry, hornbeam (Carpinus) and some white pine and hemlock on higher ground in the lower reaches of the project. Many of these trees contained cavities and are probably utilized by wood ducks, raccoons and various songbirds. One large sycamore was noted to contain a large colony of honey bees. The DEA (page 4) indicated that American beech and sugar maple are prevalent in this area; however, we did not find either of these species in the immediate flood plain area of the Konkapot River. Walking along the stream was difficult in many areas due to the prevalence of multiflora rose and silky dogwood, however, neither of these species are mentioned in the DEA.

Deer tracks were abundant in the area and several prominent trails were noted crossing the river. At one of these river crossings we noted a platform constructed in a group of trees (tree stand) which indicated that deer are hunted in this area.

Raccoon tracks were noted on nearly every sandbar and muskrat scat was evident on logs and rocks along the stream. A beaver dam obstructed the river in the upper reaches of the project. Fresh cuttings and trails indicated it was an active flowage. Although mink sign was scarce, the general cover conditions of log jams, blow-downs, undercut banks and dense streamside vegetation should afford excellent habitat for this species. Cottontail rabbits were not seen in the area although the combination of multiflora rose and herbaceous vegetation suggests that a significant population of this species should be present.

The area affords excellent habitat for waterfowl, especially wood ducks. This excellence was verified by our flushing of 56 wood ducks from the river and adjacent wetlands in the project area. Most of these ducks flushed from under overhanging trees, behind log jams and small blow-downs and other areas that provided cover. However, the DEA states (page6) that "...they are not too abundant in the project area, and should be able to relocate to neighboring vicinities where wooded areas still exist." Without benefit of specific data we must assume that neighboring areas are at or near maximum carrying capacity for the quality of habitat available. Neighboring areas can absorb displaced waterfowl only if the carrying capacity has been improved through appropriate wildlife management practices. This type of mitigation was not discussed in the DEA.

During the course of our investigation, we counted eight (8) log jams, including the beaver dam, that could seriously hinder the passage of flood flows. We would not object to the removal and appropriate disposal of these eight obstructions. However, we do object to the removal of single logs and pockets of debris, overhanging trees and standing dead or live trees along the river bank that pose no immediate threat to flooding. Removal of such material would significantly reduce the area's habitat value for terrestrial as well as aquatic wildlife species. We believe this material should be left in place and not be removed until it actually seriously obstructs the passage of stream flow.

In order to preserve the habitat value of this section of stream this Service and the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife would be pleased to assist you in the marking of obstructions/material that should be removed.

We understand that the gravel access road would not encroach upon wetland areas. This road would permanently remove about 0.2 acres of terrestrial habitat, however, we do not anticipate a significant adverse impact upon resources of the area.

The project as currently proposed would significantly reduce the habitat value of the area for fish and wildlife resources. Therefore, we recommend that:

1. Only major obstructions to the passage of flood flows be removed.

2. Determination of the actual obstructions/material to be removed be coordinated with this Service and the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife.

3. Future maintenance of the project be coordinated with the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife.

Please keep us informed on the status of your study.

Sincerely yours,

Gordon E. Beckett

Gordon E. Beckett
Supervisor
New England Field Office

Sept. 12, 1984

Dept. of the Army
Planning Division
Impact Analysis Branch
424 Trapelo Rd.
Waltham, MA. 02254

Sir:

Regarding the planned Section 208 on the Konkapot River in Sheffield, MA, I have the following requested information:

Aquatic species occupying proposed project area

	Salmo	gairdneri	rainbow trout
	Cyprinus	capio	carp
	Notropis	bifrenatus	bridled shiner
	N.	cornutis	common "
	Rhinichthys	atratulus	blacknose dace
	Catostomus	commersoni	white sucker
	Perca	flavescens	yellow perch
*	Lepomis	gibbosus	pumpkinseed
*	L.	macrochirus	bluegill

* possible

Eurycea	bislineata	two-lined salamander
Rana	catesbeiana	bullfrog
R.	clamitans	green frog
R.	palustris	pickerel frog
R.	pipiens	N. leopard frog
Hyla	crucifer	spring peeper
Chrysemys	picta	painted turtle
Clemmys	insculpta	wood turtle
Nerodia	sipedon	N. water snake
Thamnophis	sirtalis	E. garter snake

Terrestrial animals affected

Ondatra	zibethicus	muskrat
Procyon	lotor	raccoon
Mustela	vison	mink

I hope this is of help.

Douglas Cross
Sheffield Conservation Commission, member

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
Office of the Secretary of State
294 Washington Street
Boston, Massachusetts
02108
617-727-8470

MICHAEL JOSEPH CONNOLLY
Secretary of State

July 12, 1984

Joseph Ignazio, Chief
Planning Division
Army Corps of Engineers
424 Trapelo Road
Waltham, Mass 02254

RE: Debris Removal, Konkapot River, Sheffield

Dear Mr. Ignazio:

Thank you for your letter concerning the proposed debris removal in the Konkapot River in Sheffield.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission, (Office of Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Officer), has reviewed the project area and activities for effects to historic and archaeological properties. There are no known or anticipated significant historic or archaeological resources within the area of the proposed action. No further review in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and Advisory Council Regulations (36CFR 800) is necessary.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact Brona Simon of the Massachusetts Historical Commission staff.

Sincerely,

Patricia L. Weslowski
State Historic Preservation Officer
Massachusetts Historical Commission

PLW/BS/lk

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
ECOLOGICAL SERVICES
P.O. BOX 1518
CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03301

JUL 6 1984

Mr. Joseph L. Ignazio, Chief
Planning Division
New England Division
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
424 Trapelo Road
Waltham, MA 02254

Dear Mr. Ignazio:

This responds to your June 13, 1984 request for information on the presence of Federally listed and proposed endangered or threatened species in conjunction with your proposal for a Section 208-Snagging and Clearing Investigation to be performed in Sheffield, Massachusetts and North Canaan, Connecticut.

Our review shows that except for occasional transient individuals, no Federally listed or proposed species under our jurisdiction are known to exist in the project impact area. Therefore, no Biological Assessment or further consultation is required with us under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. Should project plans change, or if additional information on listed or proposed species becomes available, this determination may be reconsidered.

This response relates only to endangered species under our jurisdiction. You should also formally consult us for our concerns under the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, as we have not had any contact with you on this project.

Lists of Federally designated endangered and threatened species in Massachusetts and Connecticut are enclosed for your information. Thank you for your cooperation and please contact us if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely yours,

Gordon E. Beckett
Supervisor
New England Field Office

Enclosure

FEDERALLY LISTED ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES IN MASSACHUSETTS

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status	Distribution
FISHES:			
Sturgeon, shortnose*	Acipenser brevirostrum	E	Connecticut River and Atlantic Coastal waters
REPTILES:			
Turtle, green*	Chelonia mydas	T	Oceanic straggler in Southern New England
Turtle, hawksbill*	Eretmochelys imbricata	E	Oceanic straggler in Southern New England
Turtle, leatherback*	Dermochelys coriacea	E	Oceanic summer resident
Turtle, loggerhead*	Caretta caretta	T	Oceanic summer resident
Turtle, Atlantic ridley*	Lepidochelys kempii	E	Oceanic summer resident
Turtle, Plymouth red-bellied	Chrysemys rubriventris bangsi	E	Plymouth and Dukes Counties
BIRDS:			
Eagle, bald	Haliaeetus leucocephalus	E	Entire state
Falcon, American peregrine	Falco peregrinus anatum	E	Entire state - re-establishment to former breeding range in progress
Falcon, Arctic peregrine	Falco peregrinus tundrius	E	Entire state Migratory - no nesting
MAMMALS:			
Cougar, eastern	Felis concolor cougar	E	Entire state - may be extinct
Whale, blue*	Balaenoptera musculus	E	Oceanic
Whale, finback*	Balaenoptera physalus	E	Oceanic
Whale, humpback*	Megaptera novaeangliae	E	Oceanic
Whale, right*	Eubalaena spp. (all species)	E	Oceanic
Whale, sei*	Balaenoptera borealis	E	Oceanic
Whale, sperm*	Physeter catodon	E	Oceanic
MOLLUSKS:			
NONE			
PLANTS:			
Small Whorled Pogonia	Isotria meleoloides	E	Hampshire, Essex Counties

* Except for sea turtle nesting habitat, principal responsibility for these species is vested with the National Marine Fisheries Service

Rev. Jan. 84

FEDERALLY LISTED ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES IN CONNECTICUT

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status	Distribution
FISHES:			
Sturgeon, shortnose*	Acipenser brevirostrum	E	Connecticut River and Atlantic Coastal waters
REPTILES:			
Turtle, green*	Chelonia mydas	T	Oceanic straggler in Southern New England
Turtle, hawksbill*	Eretmochelys imbricata	E	Oceanic straggler in Southern New England
Turtle, leatherback*	Dermochelys coriacea	E	Oceanic summer resident
Turtle, loggerhead*	Caretta caretta	T	Oceanic summer resident
Turtle, Atlantic ridley*	Lepidochelys kempii	E	Oceanic summer resident
BIRDS:			
Eagle, bald	Haliaeetus leucocephalus	E	Entire state
Falcon, American peregrine	Falco peregrinus anatum	E	Entire state - re-establishment to former breeding range in progress
Falcon, Arctic peregrine	Falco peregrinus tundrius	E	Entire state Migratory - no nesting
MAMMALS:			
Cougar, eastern	Felis concolor cougar	E	Entire state - may be extinct
Whale, blue*	Balaenoptera musculus	E	Oceanic
Whale, finback*	Balaenoptera physalus	E	Oceanic
Whale, humpback*	Megaptera novaeangliae	E	Oceanic
Whale, right*	Eubalaena spp. (all species)	E	Oceanic
Whale, sei*	Balaenoptera borealis	E	Oceanic
Whale, sperm*	Physeter catodon	E	Oceanic
MOLLUSKS:			
NONE			
PLANTS:			
Small Whorled Pogonia	Isotria meleoloides	E	Hartford, New Haven, Fairfield, New London, Windham, Tolland, Litchfield Counties

* Except for sea turtle nesting habitat, principal responsibility for these species is vested with the National Marine Fisheries Service

Rev. 1/27/84